

June 5, 2011

## **The Life of Robert S. Thompson**

- Memorial Services for Robert S. Thompson, 92, of Aberdeen will be 11 a.m., Monday, June 6 at Plymouth Congregational Church, Aberdeen. The Reverend Jill Warner will officiate. Private inurnment will be held at Groton Union Cemetery preceding the service.
- Robert died of lung cancer at Bethesda Home of Aberdeen on Thursday, June 2, 2011.
- Robert was born April 25, 1919 at Tyndall, S.D. to William A. and Maude (Breckenridge) Thompson. When he was only a few days old his father took him to Sioux City, IA for surgery, as he was born with spina bifida. The family moved to Webster, SD the summer of 1919 where his father was superinten



dent of schools. The moved to Springfield, SD in 1933 where his father was president of Southern College. Robert attended Southern College for three years, but came to Aberdeen in 1940, graduating from NSTC in 1941. It was at Northern that he met his future wife, Mary Simonson, of Groton. After serving briefly with the Army Signal Corps he received a medical discharge because of his back. He taught one year at Elk Point, SD, and after his marriage to Mary Simonson May 29, 1943, he was the principal at Pierpont for two years, and then superintendent at Amherst from 1945-48 when he became a professor of American history and government at Northern, where he taught for 39 years. He was a great resource and shared his wealth of information with anyone who had a question about history. He was a well-known public speaker and writer, contributing to *Dakota Panorama*, *Brown County History*, *Western Quarterly*, and wrote the chapter on Governor Ralph Herseth for the book, *Over a Century of Leadership - South Dakota Territorial & State Governors*. He had a brilliant encyclopedic mind, a flawless memory, and was renowned and beloved for his quick wit. His passion was reading history books. He was a faithful member of Kiwanis and Plymouth Congregational Church for over 60 years.

- He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mary; three children - William (Anne) of Sioux Falls, Mary Jo of Ortonville, MN, and Paul of St. Paul, MN; three grandchildren - Geoff of Englewood, CO, Sarah of Washington, DC, Sonja of St. Paul, MN, sister, Maude Palumbo of Pinehurst, NC and many nieces and nephews.
- He was preceded in death by his parents, three brothers - Harding, Benton and H.O., and two infant sisters, Carmen and Alice.
- Memorials can be directed to The Salvation Army, 1003 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Aberdeen or to Plymouth Congregational Church-Furnace Fund, 431 West Melgaard Rd, Aberdeen.

## The Life of Robert S. Thompson

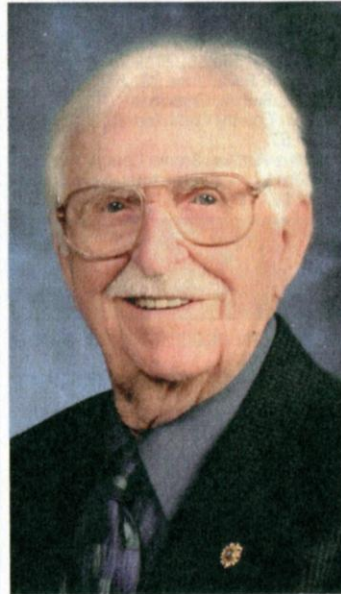
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